

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 EUR-12 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 ARA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01 /098 W

----- 109441

O R 301750Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8076

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 0155

ABIDJAN ALSO FOR DAO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, AN, DM, GV

SUBJ: BENIN TO SEND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF "VOLUNTEERS" TO  
ANGOLA

REF A - COTONOU 134, B - COTONOU 130,C - 75 COTONOU A-95

SUMMARY: PRES KEREKOU HAS ANNOUNCED THAT A BENINESE "EXPEDITIONARY" FORCE WILL BE FORMED AND SENT UNDER REGULAR ARMY OFFICERS TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE MPLA IN ANGOLA. ANNOUNCEMENT CAME AT MASS RALLY FOLLOWING INTENSIVE THREE DAY PROPAGANDA BUILD-UP ON ANGOLA. USG WAS THE PRIMWITARGET OF THE

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CAMPAIGN. KEREKOU'S ACTION IS PROBABLY DUE AT LEAST IN PART

TO SOVIET PERUASION, BUT SHOULD ALSO BE SEEN IN LIGHT OF  
MESSIANIC CHARACTER OF BENINESE MARXIST-LENINISM. EMBASSY  
HAS SOME DOUBTS WHETHER THE BENINESE FORCE WILL GET TO LUANDA.  
IF IT DOES, IT WILL NEED A LOT OF SOVIET-CUBAN LEADERSHIP  
AND PROTECTION. IF THE BENINESE INTERVENTION SCENARIO IS  
ACUTALLY CARRIED OUT, WE BELIEVE IT MIGHT HARM RATHER THAN  
BENEFIT THE KEREKOU REGIME. END SUMMARY.

1. AMB ADJIBADE'S ANTI-AMERICAN ADDRESS ON PRES KEREKOU'S  
BEHALF AT THE OAU SUMMIT IN ADDIS (REF B) AND BENIN OFFICIAL  
NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL OF JAN 27 CRITICIZING AMERICAN POLICY  
TOWARD ANGOLA (REF A) BECAME BASIS FOR THREE-DAY PROPAGANDA  
CAMPAIGN CULMINATING IN GOVT-ORGANIZED MASS RALLY YESTERDAY  
JAN 29. GOVT ORDERED ALL ESTABLISHMENTS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
INCLUDING SCHOOLS, CLOSED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND URGED EVERY-  
ONE TO ATTEND RALLY. THIS PUBLIC GATHERING WAS HARANGUED AT  
COTONOU LABOR CENTER BY LABOR LEADER AND NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY  
COUNCIL MEMBER ROMAIN VILON-GUEZO, WHO HAS  
LONG RECORD OF WFTU AFFILIATION AND COLLABORATION WITH SOVIETS.

2. PARTICIPANTS THEN MARCHED TO PRESIDENCY WHERE KEREKOU  
ADDRESSED THEM. HE DECLARED THAT "AFTER THE CRUSHING FAILURES  
OF IMPERIALISM IN ASIA (MEANING USG IN INDOCHINA AND KOREA)  
AND ELSEWHERE, THE FUTURE OF OUR...CONTINENT IS AT THE HEART  
OF THE PREOCCUPATIONS OF THE IMPERIALIST POWERS...ANGOLA IS THE  
NEW TESTING ROUND OF RECONQUEST AND OF NEW PARTITION INTO  
ZONES OF INFLUENCE...THE IMPERIALIST MENANCE IN ANGOLA IS A  
MENACE TO THE BENIN REVOLUTION...AFRICAN PEOPLES MUST REDOUBLE  
THEIR VIGILANCE AND STOP THE IMPERIALISTS' INVASION PLANS  
TO RECONQUER ANGOLA...THEREFORE BENIN MUST ASSIST ANGOLA  
BOTH MORALLY AND MATERIALLY. HE DECLARED FEB THIRD A DAY  
OF SUPPORT FOR THE MPLA DURING WHICH LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND  
"COMMITTEES FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION" THROUGHOUT THE  
COUNTRY WOULD RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT IN ANGOLA. AFTER  
HIS ADDRESS KEREKOU SAID THESE VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE LED IN ANGOLA  
BY REGULAR OFFICERS OF THE BENINESE ARMED FORCES.

3. THERE IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT MIN OF INTERIOR AND  
INFORMATION/NATIONAL ORIENTATION LT MARTIN DOHOU AZONHIHO  
(A COMMUNIST) IS LEAVING TODAY FOR LUANDA. PRESUMABLY HIS  
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OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXPEDIT-  
IONARY FORCE.

4. DURING COURSE OF HIS MEETING WITH FORNMIN ALLADAYE THIS  
MORNING AMB ASKED HIM IS HE WISHED TO COMMENT ON BENIN GOVT'S  
DECISION TO SEND VOLUNTEERS TO ANGOLA. EMBASSY HAD TO REPORT  
THIS DEVELOPMENT OF COURSE AND WANTED TO BE SURE IT GOT THE  
THING STRAIGHT. ALLADAYE SAID BENIN'S ACTIONS IN REGARD TO

ANGOLA WERE BENIN'S BUSINESS. IF WE WANTED INFO WE COULD CHECK WITH THE WIRE SERVICES (FULL REPORT ON THAT CONVERSATION, ON SUBJECT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, FOLLOWS SEPTEL).

5. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT SOVIETS HAVE PULLED THE WIRES FOR THIS MOVE, WHICH WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT PROPAGANDA COUP AND MIGHT STIMULATE SIMILAR GESTURES BY OTHER PRO-MPLA AFRICAN GOVTS. IT COULD ALSO COMPLICATE ANY ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE ANY "NEUTRAL" SORT OF OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE.

6. BENIN GOVT NOW HAS SUCH CONTROL OVER ITS POPULATION THAT IT SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE MUSTERING A "VOLUNTEER" CONGINGENT, PARTICULARLY FROM AMONG THE URBAN UNEMPLOYED AND THE MILITANT GRASS-ROOTS FLOTSAM OF THE "PARTY". OF COURSE SMALL ARMY AND GENDARME UNITS CAN BE SENT AS "VOLUNTEERS". WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THE TOTAL FORCE TO BE VERY LARGE.

7. AS NOTED REF C, BENIN IS INCAPABLE OF WAGING WAR ITSELF. THE FEW OFFICERS CAPABLE OF EXERCISING EFFECTIVE COMMAND ARE IN PRISON OR IN NON-JOBS (ACTUALLY ONE OF THEM MIGHT BE SELECTED FOR THE COMMAND IN ORDER TO GET HIM OUT OF THE WAY). ANY BENINESE CONTINGENT IN ANGOLA WOULD REQUIRE SPECIAL SUPPORT AND PROTECTION FROM SOVIETS AND CUBANS.

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SY-05 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 ARA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01 /098 W

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O R 301750Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8077

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
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AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU  
USMISSION USUN NY

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ABIDJAN ALSO FOR DAO

8. IN FACT THIS EXERCISE MAY BE STRICTLY A PROPAGANDA SHOW, TO PLEASE SOVIETS AND MPLA AND HELP SPUR FURTHER RECOGNITIONS OF MPLA AMONG AFRICAN STATES. KEREKOU MAY BELIEVE THAT, SINCE THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE MAKING SO MUCH PROGRESS, THE WAR THERE WILL BE OVER BEFORE BENINESE BECOME ENGAGED.

9. PLUNGING ENTHUSIASTICALLY INTO A WAR MAY BRING SOME TEMPORARY DOMESTIC GAINS AMONG "PARTY MILITANTS" FOR THE KREKOU REGIME, WHICH SEES ITSELF AS A MESSIANIC BEARER OF MARXIST-LENINSIT TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. BUT IT IS BY NO MEANS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION THAT THE BULK OF PUBLIC OPINION WILL SUPPORT THE IDEA OF A BENIN CONTINGENT FIGHTING

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IN A DISTANT COUNTRY ALONGSIDE RUSSIANS AND CUBANS. MOREOVER IN THE LONG TERM A BENINESE MILITARY ADVENTURE IN ANGOLA, IF IT INVOLVES MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF MEN, COULD CAUSE MUCH GRIEF AND INTERNAL DIVISION. IT COULD ALSO RAISE FURTHER DOUBTS ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE KEREKOU GOVERNMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY (WHICH IS TEADILY LOSING CONFIDENCE IN KEREKOU) AS WELL AS AMONG THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS AND WESTERN-FINANCED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE KEEPING BENIN AFLAOT.

10. WE WOULD CALL ATTENTION TO FACT THAT BENIN'S PROPAGANDA RE ANGOLA IS CONCENTRATED AGAINST USG. UNTIL FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS AGO BENIN SIMPLY LUMPED USG TOGETHER WITH FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY FOR CRITICISM AS "THE IMPERIALISTS." SINCE SEPTEMBER OR SO, PRESSURE AGAINST FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY HAS EASED CONSIDERABLY. IT IS NOW WE WHO ARE THE WHIPPING BOY FOR EVERYTHING BENIN'S MARXIST-LENINIST LEADERSHIP FINDS WRONG WITH THE WORLD.

END COMMENT.

11. ACTION RECOMMENDED: THAT USG GIN UP A LITTLE PSYWAR, STRESSTING MORE THAN HERETOFORE THAT "VOLUNTEERS" WILL (A) JOIN OR FIGHT ALONGSIDE CUBAN UNITS, UNDER SOVIET ADVICE OR COMMAND, (B) KILL THEIR BLACK ANGOLAN BROTHERS, AND (C) HELP REESTABLISH WHITE IMPERIALISM IN AFRICA. BENINESE POPULATION, ALMOST COMPLETELY INSULATED, HAS LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF FACTS.

VOA COVERAGE OF ANGOLA THUS FAR, WHICH STRESSES US ADMINISTRATION'S STRUGGLE WITH CONGRESS, ALLEGATIONS RE CIA, AND CONTRADICTORY DECLARATIONS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, IS NOT RELEVANT OR CLEAR ENOUGH FOR BENINESE UNDERSTANDING.  
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## Message Attributes

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